

Excise Duty Evasion

4377. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether there are large number of industrial units manufacturing carts of branded goods without obtaining permission from the Commissioner of Central Excise thereby evading payment of central excise duty substantially;
- (b) if so, the number of such manufacturing units that have been detected and how much central excise duty they have evaded over the period;
- (c) the action has been taken against those manufacturing units;
- (d) whether there is any proposal to extensively unearth such units to check Government taxes evasion and to book them; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Smuggling of Narcotics

4378. SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

- (a) the steps Government propose to take to check the smuggling of narcotics in the country;
- (b) whether the Government propose to enhance the period of punishment for smuggling of narcotics; and
- (c) if so the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) Government has already taken following necessary steps to check the smuggling of narcotics in the country :-

- (i) Instructions have been issued to all the enforcement agencies to maintain the utmost vigil and step up enforcement efforts under the stringent provisions contained in NDPS Act.
- (ii) The dedicated narcotic cells are operational in Police and the Customs and Central Excise formations in the border States.
- (iii) 2/3rd of Indo-Pak border has been fenced and provided with flood lighting.

- (iv) BSF and Coast Guards, who are deployed on land and coastal borders, have been vested with powers under the Customs Act to interdict narcotic drugs on the border in addition to the several Central and State Government enforcement agencies empowered under the NDPS Act.
 - (v) Training is being imparted to officers to improve their effectiveness. Vehicles and communication equipment have been provided.
 - (vi) Reward scheme for informers and enforcement officers is being implemented zealously.
 - (vii) Quarterly coordination meetings chaired by DG, NCB are held regularly in New Delhi which are attended by all Enforcement agencies involved in fighting against drug trafficking, at the highest level.
 - (viii) A bilateral agreement has been arrived at with authorities in Pakistan whereby periodic meetings take place at Secretary level and DG level. Representatives of Indian & Pakistani anti-narcotics agencies have been included in the border meetings of BSF and Pak Rangers. Contact points have been designated by the two countries for direct operational communication.
 - (ix) A comprehensive bilateral agreement has been entered into by the Govt. of India and the Government of Union of Myanmar for reducing demand and preventing illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs.
 - (x) The Govt. of India has provided two drug sniffer dogs and also trained dog-handlers to Myanmar for detection of drugs.
- (b) and (c) Yes, Sir. It is proposed to amend the N.D.P.S. Act, inter-alia, to rationalise the sentence structure so as to make the Act more effective by providing stringent punishment even for offences relating to cannabis including cultivation of cannabis. The enhanced punishment for previous convicts for selected offences is proposed to be extended to all the offences under the Act.

Trade with core labour standard

4379. SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD : SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the decision was taken in the Ministerial Conference of World Trade Organisations held in December 1996 in Singapore regarding linkage of free

trade with Core labour standards; and

- (b) if so, the steps taken by Government in the light thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) No decision was taken linking trade with labour standards at the Singapore Ministerial Conference. The decision taken was follows :

"We renew our commitment to the observance of internationally recognised core labour standards. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the competent body to set and deal with these standards, and we affirm our support for its work in promoting them. We believe that economic growth and development fostered by increased by trade and further trade liberalization contribute to the promotion of these standards. We reject the use of labour standards for protectionist purposes and agree that the comparative advantage of countries particularly lowwage developing countries, must in no way be put into question. In this regard, we note that the WTO and ILO Secretariats will continue their existing collaboration"

- (b) Does not arise.

Registration of Patents under W.T.O.

4380. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the number of patents registered or applied for registration of patents under the WTO Agreement till date;

(b) the names of the companies who have applied for registration and the names of the products; and

(c) the names of the countries who have applied for the same products which India has applied ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Settings up of EOUs in Gujarat

4381. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cent per cent export oriented units set up during each of the last three years in the State of Gujarat, locationwise; and

(b) the details of such units out of the above which have started commercial production in the State of Gujarat during the above period, location-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) 70 units were set up during the years 1993-94 to 1995-96 in Gujarat in the Districts of Ahmedabad, Baroda, Kheda, Bhavnagar, Kutch, Bharuch, Surat, Valsad, Mehsana, Gandhinagar, Panchmahal, Sabarkantha and Amreli.

(b) 35 units have started commercial production in the State during the above period. These units are located in the Districts of Valsad, Gandhinagar, Ankleshwar, Bharuch, Mahuva, Bhavnagar, Sabarkantha, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Panchmahal, Surat and Mehsana.

Delays in clearance of imported Goods.

4382. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether frequent complaints about delays in clearance of imported goods by the Customs Department are received;

(b) if so, the number of complaints received and disposed of during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) the time fixed for resolving complaints and average time generally taken;

(d) whether self removal procedure for customs clearance is under consideration;

(e) if so, the time by which the decision is likely to be taken; and

(f) if not, the reasons, therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) and (b) Representations are occasionally received in Custom Houses regarding delay in clearance from importers and exporters.

(c) Senior officers attend to such representations and they are resolved quickly. There is a grievance redressal machinery in each Custom House in the form of Public Grievance Committee and Watch Dog Panel where senior officers and representatives of Trade and Custom House Agents periodically meet to resolve such complaints.

(d) to (f) Facility of Self-Assessment is available to Government Departments, Public Sector Undertakings and other importers with proven and unblemished track record subject to fulfilment of specified conditions. Facility of Green Channel and Fast Track Clearance is also available to specified category of big importers such as Super Star Trading Houses, Star Tradding Houses, Trading Houses